

Flaxton Environment Group

Big Garden Birdwatch: Report on results for Flaxton 2026

Introduction

The Big Garden Birdwatch is a national survey run once a year by the RSPB. It involves individuals or families recording the maximum number of birds of each species seen at one time in their garden over a period of one hour. The hour-long recording period can be at any time during the day within the period of the survey. In 2026 the survey ran from the 23rd to the 25th of January.

People taking part in the survey within Flaxton were asked to send their results to the Flaxton Environmental Group so that a summary could be produced of what had been seen, as a record for the village, and for comparison in future years.

Results

Records were received from only five gardens this year, compared to 6 in 2025 and 8 in 2024. This is a small number from which to draw generalisations. Furthermore, only three of these gardens also reported in 2025, so care must be taken when drawing comparisons between the years, as the location and habitats within the gardens will affect the types of birds living in them.

Numbers of birds of each species seen and the numbers of gardens that they were seen in are summarised in the table below, along with the ranks for 2026, 2025 and 2024. In total, 154 birds of 22 species (compared to 23 in 2025) were counted. Of these, only eight were seen in more than half of the gardens, and only two (Blackbird and Blue Tit) were seen in all five gardens. Three species (Goldcrest, Linnet and Sparrow Hawk) were seen in only one garden. The average number of bird species counted per garden was 11.2. The species most commonly seen was House Sparrow (up from second in 2025) followed by Blackbird (first in 2025), Blue Tit (also third in 2025), and Robin (up from 10th in 2025).

Fifteen species have been seen in all three years in which results have been collected, showing that they are all regular visitors to gardens in the village. Wrens were also seen in two gardens. They were previously recorded in 2024 but not 2025. They are common birds but often difficult to see. A Sparrow hawk was seen in one garden in 2026 and also in 2025. Two species not seen in either of the previous years were seen in more than one garden in 2026: Carrion Crow and Magpie. Two more species not seen previously were seen in just one garden: Goldcrest and Linnet. Goldcrests are tiny birds which don't come to bird feeders and are not easy to see. They are more likely to be found in gardens with conifers. The linnet is an unusual garden visitor; they are generally found on farmland, heaths etc and rarely in gardens.

No tree sparrows were recorded this year, however some recorders just noted 'sparrow', and it was assumed these were House Sparrows as they are the commoner species, but it's possible that some could have been Tree Sparrows. Several other less common species seen in previous years were not recorded in 2026 (see table below).

The RSPB was still collecting results at the time of writing (4 February), but according to their website, the three top species in North Yorkshire were the same as in Flaxton, though in North Yorkshire a whole, Blue tit came second after House Sparrow, with Blackbird coming third. In the UK the order was House Sparrow, Blue Tit, Starling, Woodpigeon, Great Tit and Blackbird. As noted

previously, Starlings appear to be less common in Flaxton relative to other species, compared to the country as a whole.

Species 2026	Total birds seen 2026	Number of Gardens (out of 5) 2026	Rank 2026	Rank 2025	Rank 2024
House Sparrow	29	4	1	2	1
Blackbird	21	5	2	1	3
Bue tit	14	5	3	3	2
Robin	9	4	4	10	8
Goldfinch	9	2	5	5	9
Long-tailed tit	9	2	5	8	12=
Great tit	7	4	7	6	5
Woodpigeon	7	4	7	14	4
Greenfinch	6	2	9	11	16
Starling	6	2	9	12	12=
Carrion Crow	5	3	10	-	-
Magpie	5	2	11	-	-
Jackdaw	5	1	12	17=	6
Dunnock	4	4	13	7	10
Chaffinch	4	2	14	4	7
Collared dove	4	2	14	15=	11
Bullfinch	3	1	16	17=	19
Coal tit	2	2	17=	13	14=
Wren	2	2	17=	-	18
Goldcrest	1	1	19=	-	-
Linnet	1	1	19=	-	-
Sparrow Hawk	1	1	19=	19=	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	0	0	-	15=	-
Marsh tit	0	0	-	-	20
Moorhen	0	0	-	19=	-
Nuthatch	0	0	-	19=	-
Redwing	0	0	-	19=	-
Rook	0	0	-	19=	-
Siskin	0	0	-	-	17
Tree Sparrow	0	0	-	9	14=

A big thank you once again to all those who took part and submitted their records. I hope you enjoyed it and may be tempted to have another go next year.

Nigel Boatman, Flaxton Environment Group

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